

## A LETTER FROM MICHAEL MONTI

Dear Fellow Tempean:

I am a son of Tempe. I am the son of a good man who founded Monti's La Casa Vieja restaurant back in 1954 on Mill Avenue. I took the business on by buying it from my dad's trust before his passing in 1998.

I am sorry to trouble you over the holidays. But perhaps in this season for sharing you will be able to take just a moment to read this letter and lend a helping hand via a short email to Tempe City Councilman Ben Arredondo at [ben\\_arredondo@tempe.gov](mailto:ben_arredondo@tempe.gov).

Monti's is a special place historically and socially. Its walls tell the story of Tempe before and now - weddings, reunions, sporting events, birthdays or just a nice place for lunch or dinner. In many ways, Monti's is the heartbeat of the city. We must preserve it for future generations. My family, along with my partner Eddie Goitia, have dedicated our lives to saving the experience.

But now it's in jeopardy. Please allow me to share with you why. And please allow me to call on your help to prevent this from happening. The onslaught of chain restaurants, subsidies for others, increasing food prices, increasing fuel prices and the costly maintenance of a very large old building makes it hard to operate profitably. That's why we need to redevelop our property so we can not only ensure the future of Monti's but create a more vibrant connection along Mill to Tempe Beach Park and Town Lake.

Our preservation and redevelopment plan is now before the Tempe City Council. It saves Monti's. It has been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). It is supported by, among many others, Frank Kush, State Historian Marshall Trimble, three former Mayors of Tempe and Carl Hayden, a Tempe resident and descendant of Monti's most famous resident. It has been unanimously endorsed by Tempe's Historical Preservation Commission and overwhelmingly supported by Tempe's Development Review Commission. And on December 13th it appeared headed for take-off by the Tempe City Council.

But then our luggage got lost.

U.S. Airways has its corporate headquarters immediately to our west. That was a very tall building when it was proposed ten years ago in the Mill Avenue District. We supported its approval. But now they are opposing us. And because they filed a "legal protest," we had to get the votes from all six of the councilmembers present at a December 13th council hearing. Councilwoman Shanna Ellis was absent because of a previous commitment.

It appeared we had support from 5 of the 6 to approve a plan that would save Monti's forever. But then Councilwoman Ben Arredondo spoke up. And it was clear he was not in support. That is why we had to continue the case until January 10th when the Tempe City Council may again vote on the project. Councilman Arredondo should be commended for his public service to Tempe. However, his conduct and opposition to our preservation and redevelopment plan that night was odd. We don't say this out of disrespect but don't know how else to describe it. Everyone in the crowd noticed that after numerous compromises appeared on the brink of passage, Councilman Arredondo appeared to look into the crowd at the US Airways lobbyist who appeared to encourage him to reject the plan. The council hearing that night was broadcast on Channel 11 so anyone can order a copy to watch this for themselves.

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